

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph bridging pages 27 and 28 as follows:

To attain a sufficiently high Cr reduction degree, as described above, the reduction of chromium oxide must be allowed to start before the internally added carbonaceous material is consumed. To that end, by the time the Fe metallization degree reaches 50%, the temperature of the pellets (mixture) must be raised to at least 1,114°C, which is the temperature at which the reduction of chromium oxide starts. According to Fig. 4, the Fe metallization degree reached 80% or higher at 1,300°C for a pellet residence time of 125 seconds; therefore, the estimated residence time of the pellets (mixture) for which the Fe metallization degree reached 50% is about 78 seconds. The temperature at which the pellets (mixture) were charged into the small heating furnace was about 25°C. Hence, the temperature of the pellets must be raised by 1,089°C ($1,114^{\circ}\text{C} - [50^{\circ}\text{C}]$) $\frac{25^{\circ}\text{C}}{1,089^{\circ}\text{C}} = 1,089^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 78 seconds. The average temperature raising rate in this residence time is 13.6°C/s ($1,089^{\circ}\text{C}/78 \text{ seconds} = 13.6^{\circ}\text{C/s}$). Accordingly, the average rate of raising the temperature of the pellets (mixture) is preferably 13.6°C/s or higher.